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360Zine

Issue 32 | July 2009

Free Magazine For Xbox 360 Gamers. *Read it, Print it, Send it to your mates...*

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW & INTERVIEW

MODERN WARFARE 2

Infinity Ward's back and gunning for game of the year



PLUS!



PREVIEWED
WET



PREVIEWED
**ASSASSIN'S
CREED 2**



PREVIEWED
**KING OF
FIGHTERS XII**



REVIEWED
CALL OF JUAREZ 2



REVIEWED
PROTOTYPE



CONTROL →





Welcome to 360Zine



The game of the year could well be here. Well almost... This issue we have a behind-closed-doors look at the one and only Modern Warfare 2. If you thought it was going to shock and awe you then we don't reckon you're gonna be too disappointed when the game finally ships this November. Of course Infinity Ward are playing many of their cards close to their flak-jacketed chests, but we did manage to get Studio Head, Vince Zampella in our sites for a quick interview while we were in the zone.

Of course there's more though: Assassin's Creed II, Wet, Guitar Hero 5, Transformers and King of Fighters XII are all lining in the preview section; while Prototype, Bound in Blood and Red Faction: Guerilla are all ready and raring to go in the reviews section.

Enjoy the issue...

Dan Hutchinson, Editor
360zine@gamerzines.com

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**MEET THE
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**Chris
Schilling**

Busy with Call of
Juarez: Bound in Blood



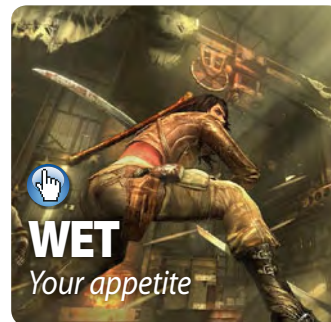
Steve Hill

Back from LA and
apparently impressed
with Modern Warfare



**David
Scammell**

Transformed from
D+ Pad to GamerZines



WET

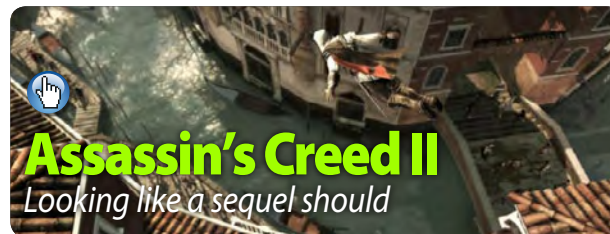
Your appetite

Don't miss! This month's top highlights



Modern Warfare 2

PREVIEW & EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



Assassin's Creed II

Looking like a sequel should



Prototype

Full-on review



**Call of Juarez:
Blood in Blood**

Reviewed & rated

QUICK FINDER

Every game's just a click away!

Guitar Hero 5	Modern Warfare 2
WET	Prototype
Assassin's Creed II	Call of Juarez:
Transformers:	Bound in Blood
Revenge of the	Red Faction:
Fallen	Guerilla
King of Fighters	
XII	

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We recommend you close and re-open the magazine and select "Play" when asked about the multimedia to enjoy the magazine as intended.





Guitar Hero 5

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Neversoft
Heritage: Guitar Hero: World Tour, Tony Hawk
Link: <http://gh5.guitarhero.com>
ETA: September



New 'Band Moments' will reward players for hitting particular note streams together.

FIRST LOOK

Guitar Hero 5

Jammin 'til the jam is through...

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of Guitar Hero 5

What's the story?

Story? Guitar Hero doesn't do stories. Instead, we'll be treated to a rocking mix of 85 diverse tracks, ranging from classic rock anthems like Bob Dylan's All Along the Watchtower to Kings of Leon's recent Sex on Fire, as we progress up the career ladder to rock stardom. And because Activision know how busy we all are these days, the songs won't need to be unlocked in the game's career mode first – the entire setlist will be available to play from the moment the game is first turned on. And by our reckoning, Guitar Hero 5's setlist is looking likely to be the best in the series so far.

What do we know?

While World Tour introduced band play to the Guitar Hero experience, Guitar Hero 5 is set to take it one step further. From now on there'll be no more arguments over who gets to play the drums, or who has the egotistical pleasure of strutting their stuff as the lead singer. Instead, Guitar Hero 5 allows for any combination of instruments to be played at any one time. Two people want to drum? No problem. Fancy splitting that long guitar solo between four? Why not. Coupled with the new seamless drop-in/drop-out gameplay, Guitar Hero 5, it seems, is all about choice.

When do we get more?

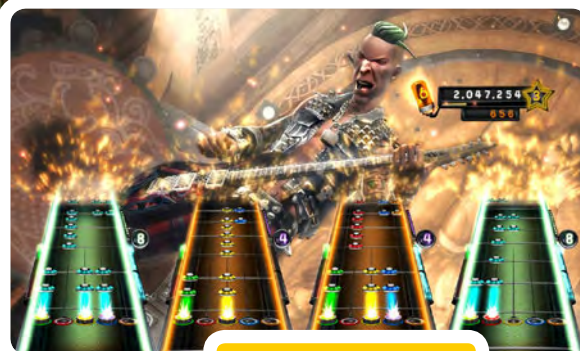
Activision has shrewdly dated Guitar Hero 5 for a North American release on September 1st, one week prior to Electronic Arts' The Beatles: Rock Band. A European release date is yet to be confirmed, but it'd be a safe bet to expect a similar launch window over here.

Anything else to declare?

If you're as big a fan of World Tour as we are, chances are you've built up a huge library of downloaded tunes. Thankfully, not only will every track downloaded for World Tour be cross-compatible with Guitar Hero 5, but they'll also be automatically updated to include all the new game's extra features, too.



If you thought buying one set of drums was costly, just wait until you buy three...



A new 'RockFest' mode offers five new head-to-head modes which will be available to play both online and off.

"Guitar Hero 5's setlist is looking likely to be the best in the series so far"

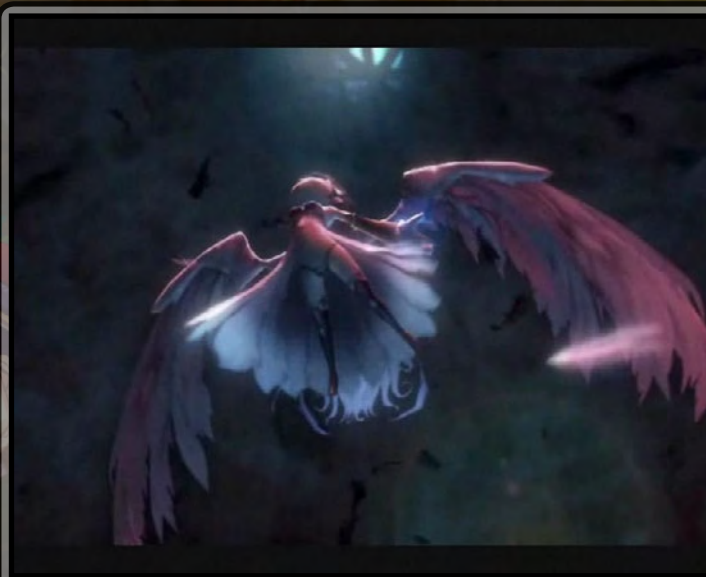


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CONTROL →





Publisher: Bethesda Softworks
Developer: A2M
Heritage: Kung Fu Panda, Iron Man (Wii), Indiana Jones and the Staff of Kings
Link: www.bethsoft.com/eng/games/games_wet.html
ETA: Autumn

HANDS ON

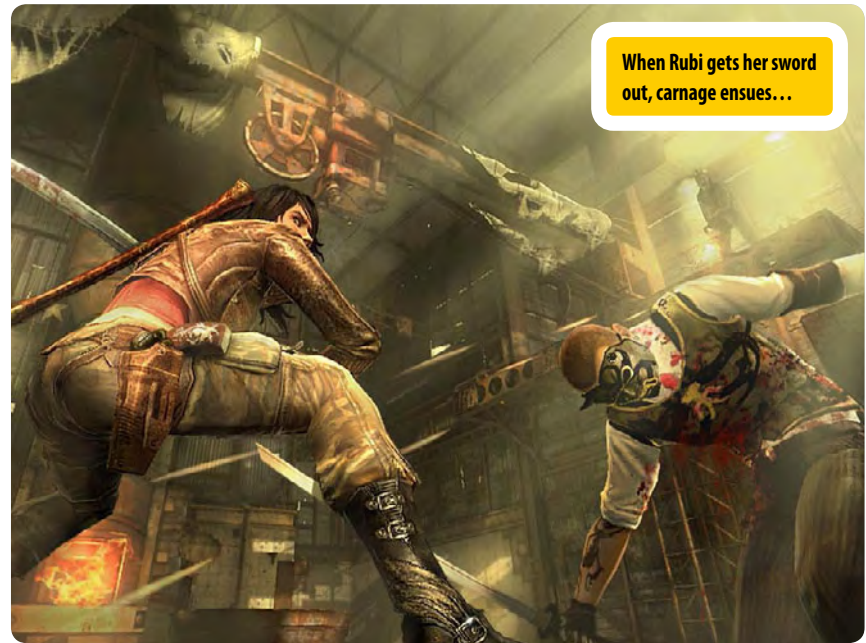
WET

Cinematic arcade-style shooter with an agreeably feisty heroine

Bethesda Softworks is renowned as a developer of quality RPGs – notably The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion and Fallout 3 – but, fascinatingly, is currently engaged in reinventing itself as a developer/publisher. WET, a third-person action-adventure-shooter developed by A2M – and originally due to be published by Sierra before falling into the limbo hell caused by the Activision-Blizzard merger – will be its first game created by a third-party. And it represents a promising start for them.

As is becoming increasingly *de rigueur* these days, WET puts you at the controls of a feisty female: Rubi Malone, a gun for hire – who A2M liken to a female Clint Eastwood. She has been hired to recover the son of a wealthy businessman, a task which proves less straightforward than it initially sounds, thanks to the requisite plot twists. You start off pursuing a dodgy character in Chinatown who has stolen a briefcase.

WET is pretty easy to describe, since it's more than a little reminiscent of Stranglehold, the John Woo game starring Chow-Yun Fat. That is, it's a



When Rubi gets her sword out, carnage ensues...

cinematic effort in which you can launch all manner of slo-mo moves designed to help you take out several enemies at once, and in a stylish manner. Rubi's slo-mo moves comprise a jump-dive, a slide and a wall-run. She has two guns, so a clever dual-targeting system – in which she auto-targets one enemy, so

you can concentrate on manually targeting others simultaneously – comes in handy. It works well, using differently shaped targeting reticules to let you know which one to move around.

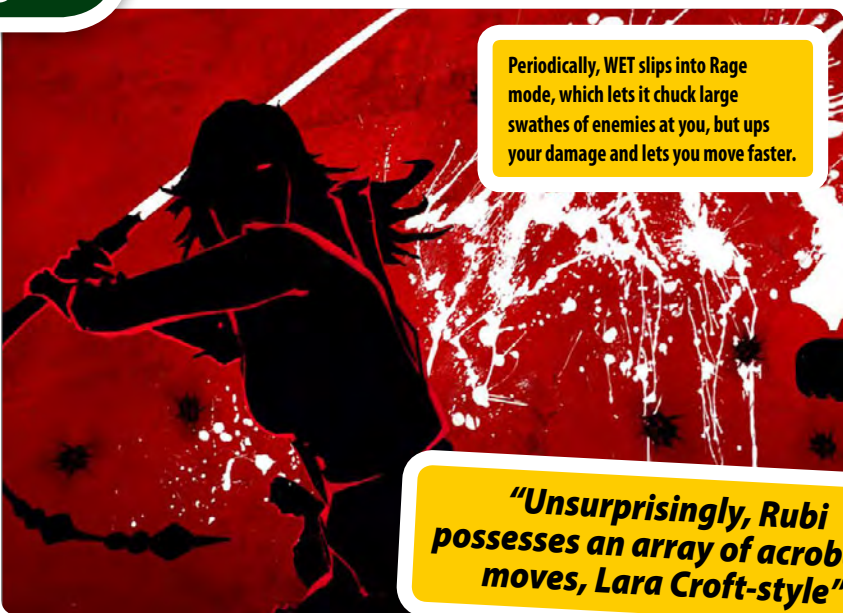
Rubi also has a sword, which inflicts satisfyingly major melee damage and, for example, acts as a lever when

"WET is pretty easy to describe, since it's more than a little reminiscent of Stranglehold"



Here's Rubi Malone doing what she does best: launching a special move that sends proceedings into slo-mo and lets her take out multiple enemies.



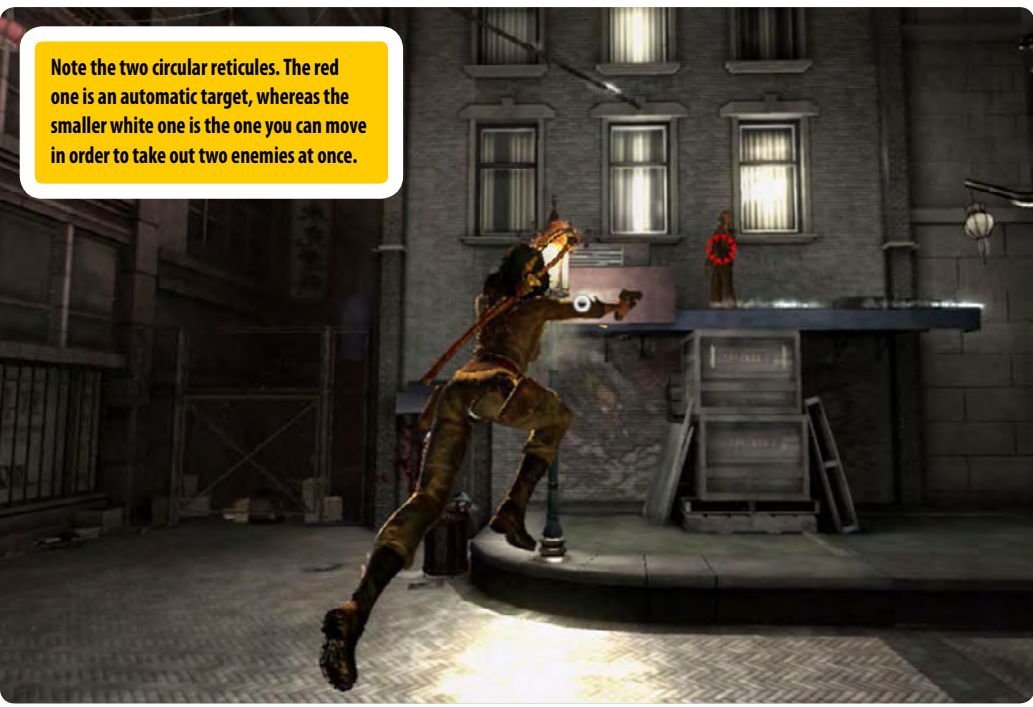


Periodically, WET slips into Rage mode, which lets it chuck large swathes of enemies at you, but ups your damage and lets you move faster.

"Unsurprisingly, Rubi possesses an array of acrobatic moves, Lara Croft-style"



The car-hopping sections are on rails, but there are quick time events to spice things up a bit.



Note the two circular reticules. The red one is an automatic target, whereas the smaller white one is the one you can move in order to take out two enemies at once.

> WET continued

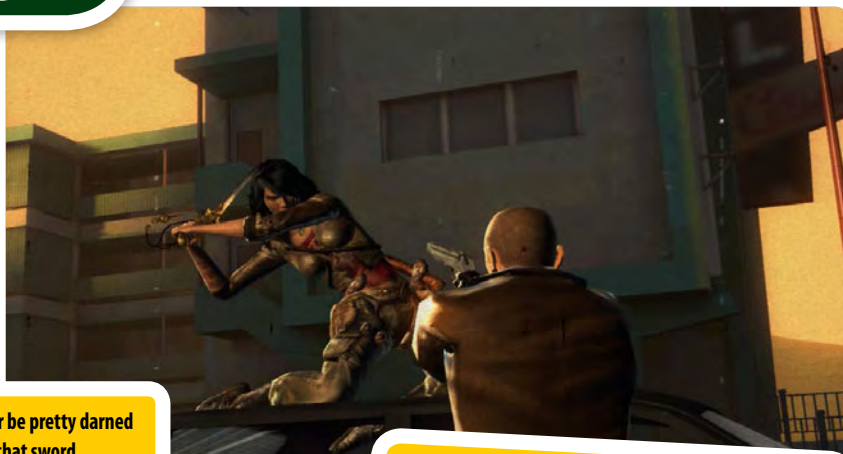
she's confronted by locked doors. Unsurprisingly, she possesses an array of acrobatic moves, Lara Croft-style – as well as running up walls and shimmying around, she can leap to and from poles, and shoot at targets when in mid-air. Stylish kills are the order of the day and, indeed, you earn style points which can be cashed in to upgrade weapons and so on throughout the course of the game.

While moving through areas, eliminating enemies as you go – in typical action-adventure game fashion – is WET's default gameplay style, it does include some variations which keep things fresh, and are generally triggered, like set-pieces, when you reach certain areas. The first such variation is termed arena-shooting by

A2M. Arenas, as you would expect, are large generally open areas, with doors dotted around them, through which endless streams of enemies will respawn. Unless, that is, you get to them and close them by hitting the action button. Arenas are pretty manic – you have to think your way around them, taking out the most immediately dangerous enemies, and plotting a route which will take you past all the doors – some of which can be fairly tricky to reach.

There are on-rails sequences too, although the one we played had enough of a twist to make it stand out from the on-rails norm. It took the form of a motorway, with Rubi periodically jumping from car to car (her jumps triggered by nailing timed button-presses). Rubi, while clinging to cars, had to shoot enemies in other cars –





She'd better be pretty darned quick with that sword.

"A2M is at pains to point out that WET is supposed to have a '1970s Grindhouse feel' to its graphics"



Another perp bites the dust...

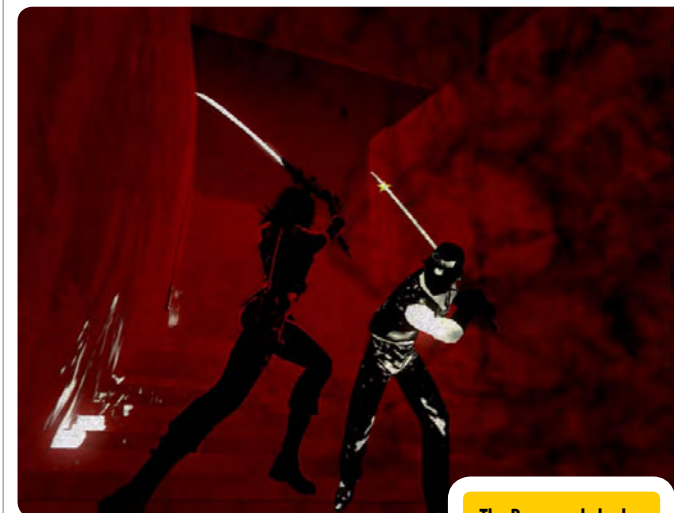
**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to
tell us what
you think
of WET

> WET continued

which was quite challenging due to general swerving around, although pulling off head-shots considerably eased the process. This sequence had an interesting trade-off: if you concentrated too hard on accurate targeting, you were liable to miss a prompt for a timed button-press, and die, as a consequence, by falling off your car. It's tricky stuff.

WET's final concept is Rage mode. Nothing too radical – when you enter it, you move 20 per cent faster and inflict more damage than normal. Naturally, in the areas in which you move into Rage mode (it, too, is triggered simply by getting to a certain area) you find higher concentrations of baddies than usual. Which again leads to a more heightened, high-adrenalin period of gameplay. But Rage mode's most striking aspect is that it drops the graphics into a highly stylised, texture-free black, white and red look not unlike that of MadWorld.

A2M is at pains to point out that WET is supposed to have a '1970s Grindhouse feel' to its graphics, and it largely achieves that aim – it has some pretty gritty settings, such as back alleys, abandoned warehouses and a room full of torture equipment, and



The Rage mode looks even more impressive in motion.

some prettier ones, like a Chinese restaurant. You wouldn't say that, in terms of detail, its graphics represent the cutting edge which is possible on an Xbox 360, but they make up for any deficiencies in terms of atmosphere.

WET isn't going to change the gaming world – it's single-player-only (A2M quotes an eight to ten-hour completion time), in common with all games that feature a Max Payne Bullet Time-style system, and it doesn't have blow-your-socks-off graphics. But it does have loads of personality, and deeply enjoyable, high-adrenaline gameplay which ebbs and flows a bit, and mixes things up sufficiently to keep you in the mix and interested. ●

360Zine



HOW COMPLETE?

70%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%

Not flashy, but plenty of fun





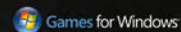
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HANDS ON

Assassin's Creed II

For once, a game sequel might just outshine its predecessor

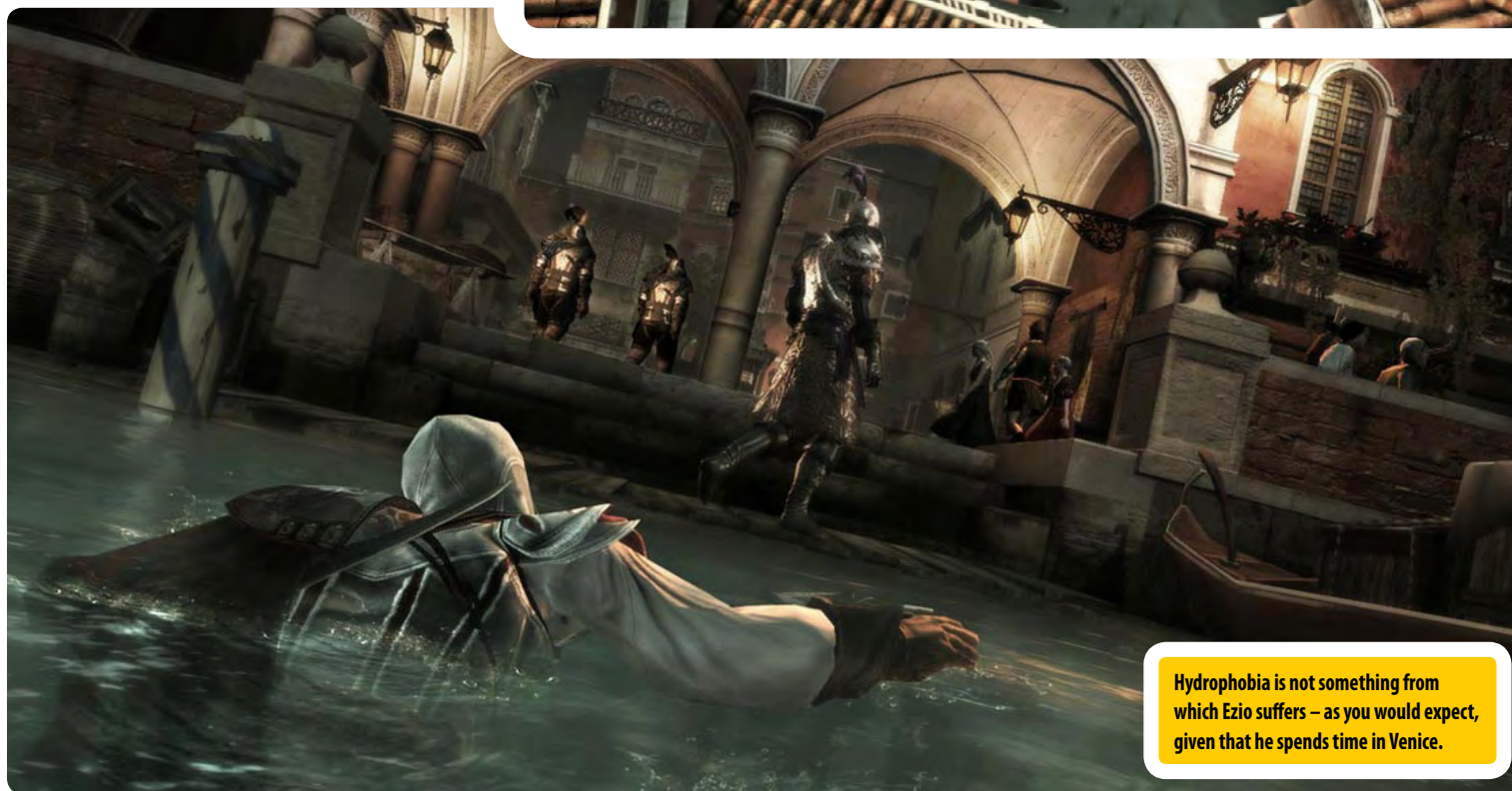
All developers strive to make games which establish a new intellectual property, innovate, win awards and sell by the shedload. The original Assassin's Creed did all those things, which you would imagine would be a good thing.

However, those who bought the game and played it discovered it was flawed: it didn't quite deliver everything promised in the extended period of hype leading up to its release – in particular, its gameplay proved unacceptably repetitive, and some aspects, such as the much-touted crowd behaviour, turned out to be slightly broken. Which you would imagine to be a bad thing.

But appearances can be deceptive when you're following up a successful game with that difficult sequel. When you come to make the second iteration, we reckon it actually helps if the original game was flawed – if, as a developer, you're able to assess it



One of Ezio's coolest new moves is a flying leap, which can help him to plummet from the roof of one building to the side of an adjacent one.



Hydrophobia is not something from which Ezio suffers – as you would expect, given that he spends time in Venice.





The fighting system is much improved from the first Assassin's Creed.

"You're the exotically named Ezio Auditore da Firenze, an assassin from Florence"



Renaissance Italy was a pretty volatile place, which provides rich material for some tasty, large-scale fights.

> Assassin's Creed II cont.

dispassionately, then work out how to eliminate those flaws in the sequel – while keeping what everybody liked about the original – you might just end up creating the classic you dreamed of the first time around.

Extensive investigation of Assassin's Creed II at E3 left us with the conviction

that Ubisoft Montreal may have given itself a potential problem when the time comes to start work on Assassin's Creed III. It certainly talks a good game – Ubisoft Montreal employees showing the game were keen to assert that Assassin's Creed II addresses the widespread criticisms of the first game, and what we saw gave credence to those assertions.



Another example of how Ezio's flying leap can be used to give him an advantage when taking out enemies.

Setting and story

Everybody loved the Middle East in the Crusades setting of Assassin's Creed, but Assassin's Creed II easily trumps that, while reinforcing the first game's slightly cerebral air. It's set in Renaissance Italy – what we saw took place in 1486, to be precise. You're the exotically named Ezio Auditore da Firenze, an assassin from Florence, although the action spans at least Florence and Venice. And it surely extends to Milan, as during the game you befriend Leonardo da Vinci, who spent a key chunk of his career there.

As ever, you have to take out a succession of local dignitaries, and given that Renaissance Italy was a loose

collection of city-states – which intrigued and fought against each other, and many of which were invaded and subjugated by the French – we're looking at a pretty rich source of material. Da Vinci was actually a friend and collaborator of Niccolò Machiavelli, so we can expect a plot which is literally Machiavellian.

For starters, the original game's AI system has been ripped out and replaced with an entirely new one. The principal benefit of this, Ubisoft claims, is that players will have more choices regarding how they progress through the game. We saw this in action, with Ezio climbing a tower in which there was a lookout he had to dispose of.





ASSASSIN'S
CREED II



A blade concealed in each wrist lets Ezio take out two people at once.

Pesky archers on rooftops can be a real pain. One way to deal with them is simply to climb up underneath them and haul them off their perches.



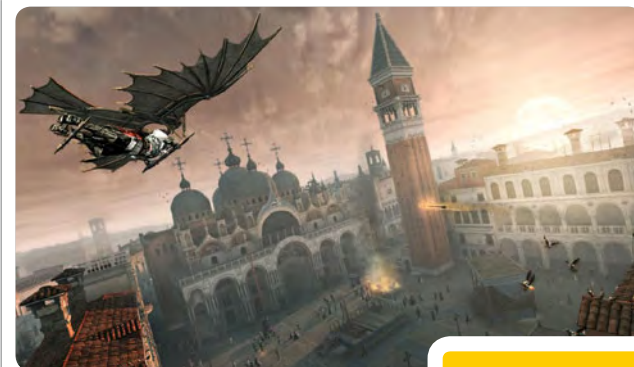
> Assassin's Creed II cont.

He could either reach out from outside the window and pull him out, sending him plummeting, or climb in behind him and push him out from inside. Ubisoft says it will be easier to blend into crowds, but your cover will be blown if Ezio enters an enemy's eyeline.

New fighting system

This time around, Ezio won't have any weapons. Instead, when confronted by enemies packing weapons, he will have to disarm one and then use it against his assailants. Ubisoft has worked assiduously on the fighting system, giving Ezio an array of moves more akin to a classy hack-'n'-slash, which vary according to where Ezio is in relationship to his victim. We saw some particularly impressive take-downs. Ezio has two concealed blades, and he can use both at once to take out two baddies, as long as those baddies are standing next to each other.

The mission shown at E3 was replete with imaginative gameplay touches which will excite fans of the original game. At one point, Ezio took to the skies above Venice in a da Vinci-designed glider; updrafts provided by the many fires burning across the city



Flying wasn't often witnessed in Renaissance Italy. Not, that is, unless you were a mate of the Leonardo da Vinci.

kept him airborne. After completing his assassination, he was surrounded by a big group of soldiers, but was able to effect an escape by lobbing two smoke bombs and scrambling through the ensuing confusion, before diving into the nearest canal – Ezio can swim, so we can expect some water-based shenanigans – which is totally unsurprisingly when Venice is one of the game's key settings.

With Ubisoft insisting: "We've revamped the mission structure, so there will be no sense of repetition," things are looking very promising indeed for Assassin's Creed II. It looks simply gorgeous, has a mouth-watering setting – which also promises a stonking storyline – and Ezio moves and fights fantastically. As long as things don't somehow go drastically wrong between now and release, we reckon it should go down as a game which is nothing less than classic. ●

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
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tell us what
you think
of Assassin's
Creed II



360Zine

ASSASSIN'S
CREED II

HOW COMPLETE?

60%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

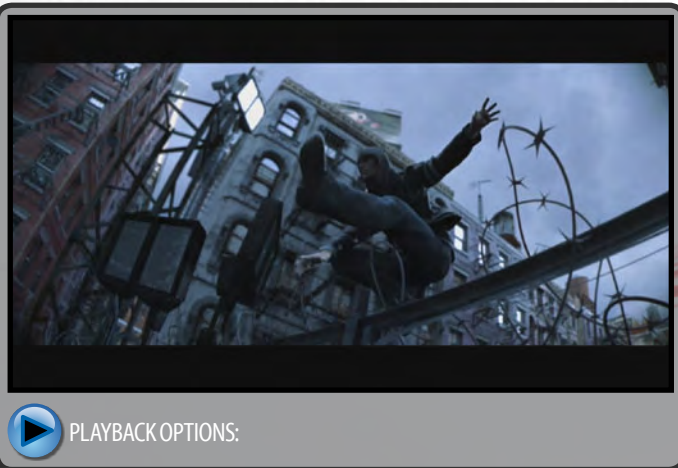
90%

The game we wanted its predecessor to be?



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CONTROL →



HANDS ON

Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen

Autobots, transform!

What's the first step you should take when developing the sequel to a game widely regarded as one of the worst movie tie-ins in recent history? Activision's answer, it seems, is to let someone else have a go. Taking the reins away from Traveller's Tales and handing them to self-confessed Transformers fans and movie game connoisseurs Luxoflux,

Revenge of the Fallen is shaping up to be a more well-rounded package than its disappointing predecessor, coming complete with an impressive-looking single-player campaign and a brand-new multiplayer component.

In true movie-license fashion, Revenge of the Fallen follows the same line of events as the film, following the Autobots' attempt to thwart a Decepticon uprising after the defeat of Megatron. Like the original, RotF will give players the chance to step into the hulking metal boots of both the Autobots and Decepticons, and allow them to play out the story from the perspective of either faction.

Five different Transformers will be available to play as on each side, including fan favourites Bumblebee, Optimus Prime and Megatron, and just like the film, each Transformer has its

The game isn't fully open-world, but Luxoflux want to give the player an incredible amount of freedom.

"Revenge of the Fallen is shaping up to be a more well-rounded package than its predecessor"

Staying true to Michael Bay's vision, expect plenty of explosions and carnage.





> Transformers continued

own unique ability for players to exploit. For example, Bumblebee can transform into a car, leading to some fantastic high-speed vehicle sections, while Starscream has the irrefutably cool ability to transform into an F-15 Eagle, lending himself options to swoop over the landscape and in-between buildings on his way to kicking Auto-butt.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, the emphasis for *Revenge of the Fallen* is being placed firmly on fun over anything else, but simultaneously Luxoflux aren't keen to skimp on realism. "I don't necessarily think that realism and fun are mutually exclusive,"

explains Gameplay Programmer Omar Aziz, and we would tend to agree. The transformation animations are wonderfully intricate, replicating the look and feel of each Transformer in tremendous detail, while the game's physics engine has clearly been spruced up too, adding a sense of gravity and momentum to the bulky bots. Meanwhile, the film's cast are all onboard to deliver an 'authentic Transformers experience', including Shia LeBeouf, the lovely Megan Fox, and John 'Marcus Fenix' Di Maggio.

The all-new multiplayer component is also set to offer five different game types for players to scrap online, including standard Deathmatch, Team Deathmatch and Capture the Flag



Optimus Prime: The best HGV the universe has ever seen?

modes, as well as a game type called 'One Shall Stand' (which looks remarkably similar to *Gears of War*'s 'Assassination'), and 'Control Points', a mode which sees players fighting for territory. But though *Transformers* has potential to be an enormous amount of fun online, we're slightly concerned that its obvious lack of creativity – as well as Luxoflux's general inexperience with multiplayer development – may not be enough to keep up with the demands of the online world.

Nevertheless, *Revenge of the Fallen* is looking to be a remarkable improvement over the lacklustre original, transforming an otherwise dreary prospect into a potentially solid summer blockbuster. ●



**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell us what you think of *Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen*



Expect plenty of variation in *Revenge of the Fallen*'s locales.

360Zine



HOW COMPLETE?

90%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

75%

A far superior sequel, but will that be enough?





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activision.com





HANDS ON

King of Fighters XII

"Now in its fifteenth year, the franchise felt ready for a reboot"

The English dub is often amusing, with the female announcer imploring you to 'select the odour' once you've picked your team of three.



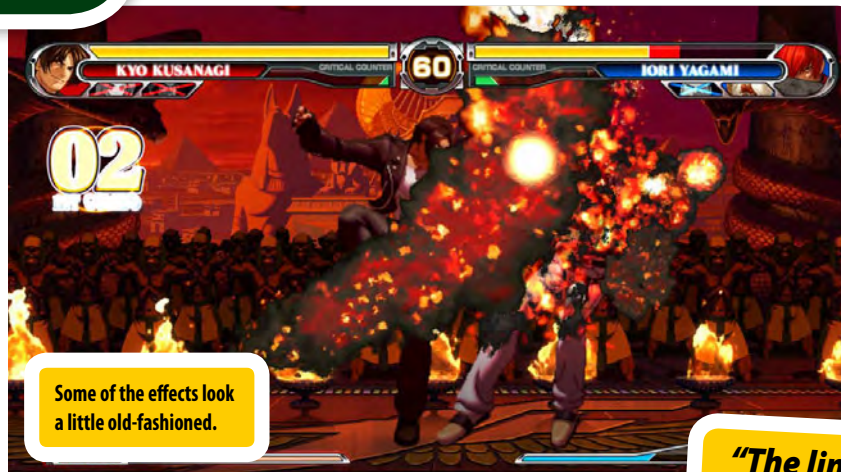
Three dimensions good, two dimensions better?

The King of Fighters series is essentially SNK's answer to Capcom's Street Fighter, and as such, the two can probably be considered bitter rivals. Yet it's likely that the success of the magisterial SFIV made home conversions of XII possible. The 2D beat-'em-up was hardly a hugely commercial prospect until Capcom's masterful reinvention, and so in a funny sort of way, KoF owes a debt to its old adversary.

Now in its fifteenth year, the franchise felt ready for a reboot, and it's not for nothing that SNK is considering XII something of a renaissance for the series. Some significant changes have been made from KoF XI, with the most immediately obvious being the replacement of the ageing character sprites with brand new hi-res, hand-animated models. As such, it's a lesson in traditional 2D art design – it's apparently taken so long for each of the artists to draw the individual

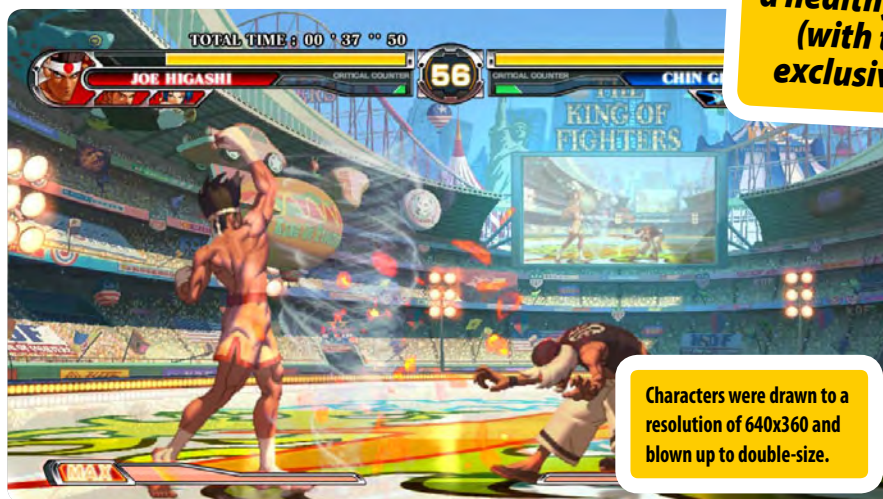


Joe's one of our favourite fighters – fast and rangy, with a good blend of attacks.



Some of the effects look a little old-fashioned.

"The line-up stands at a healthy 22 characters (with two console-exclusive additions)"



Characters were drawn to a resolution of 640x360 and blown up to double-size.

> King of Fighters XII cont.

frames of animation for each character that the roster has been downsized slightly. Not that you won't be spoilt for choice – the line-up still stands at a healthy 22 characters (with two console-exclusive additions), with four other secret characters yet to be unveiled. Visually, it's certainly striking –

in an age where two-dimensional games are the exception rather than the norm (as they were when the series first hit arcades in the mid-Nineties) it certainly stands out from the crowd. Yet it's hard to shake the fact that Street Fighter IV's beautifully realised three-dimensional fighters have a clear visual edge, not to mention a greater fluidity. But fans of the franchise will



There are some unusual sights in the backgrounds – on the French stage, the audience seems to comprise entirely of fat female fight fans.

undoubtedly be in utter raptures when they see how their favourites have been reimaged.

It's not the only big change. Movesets have been altered – in some cases almost beyond recognition, with the likes of Iori losing his fireball – and SNK has removed the Tactical Shift System in favour of a new Critical Counter. As you fight, a green meter fills up (more quickly if you're under the cosh) – once full, a well-timed counter-punch gives you a brief window to get in a flurry of attacks before your opponent can recover. It's a neat way for defensive players to turn the tables on aggressive opponents, though it can occasionally seem overpowered, particularly as the player executing the counter can finish with a special. Still, it's not as if it's unavoidable, with dashes and rolls quickly evading

incoming blows. It sticks with the three-on-three team-based system which sees players swapped out when defeated, though players aren't restricted to picking certain characters together. With absolutely no story to speak of – merely a bare-bones framework as newsreaders introduce the tournament – you can happily add



QUICKFIRE QUIZ



In screenshots, the backgrounds look more distracting than they are in-game. In motion, you can't take your eyes off the fighters.



The frail-looking Chin is a far trickier opponent than his slight build would lead you to believe.

> King of Fighters XII cont.

any three fighters to your team, regardless of affiliation.

Those who've recently re-honed their fighting craft with Street Fighter IV will likely find the controls to be fairly accessible, with just four buttons for light and heavy punches and kicks, which can be reconfigured as per player preference. Yet while that might sound overly simple, the reverse is actually true – the lightning pace of the combat and the total lack of handholding – for good or bad, there's no real tutorial – makes for a truly hardcore fight experience. While we're no beat-'em-up masters, we expected to be able to finish the five stages of our preview copy on Easy, but each time came up short against the devastating throws and slams of Goro Daimon in match four. When we finally managed to pass it, a win in the fifth remained tantalisingly out of reach. It's a tough cookie, that's for sure.

Learning the ropes

If we're honest, we did miss the ability to learn the ropes the way we were able to with SFIV's Trial mode – you can test each character's moveset in Practice mode, but you'll have to

PREVIEW FEEDBACK!
Click here to tell us what you think of King of Fighters XII



When you KO an opponent, your energy bar gets a small boost.

frequently pause the game to refer to the command list. Inputs and their associated timings aren't quite as forgiving as in Capcom's game, either, as you'll have to get those quarter-circles absolutely bang-on if you want to let off a fireball. And we'd advise you to not even consider playing without an arcade stick – the 360's D-pad just isn't up to the task, and SNK has apparently banned the use of the left analogue full stop.

Yet that's precisely the appeal of the KoF series for some. It sharpens SFIV's softer edges for what at times is a fearsomely difficult 2D fighter – traditional in every sense, you might say. But, as in the genre's very best titles, there's absolutely no denying the satisfaction at finally besting your nemesis at the umpteenth time of asking. And the pleasure is all the sweeter given the pain you have to go through to get there. ●

360Zine



HOW COMPLETE?

85%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

85%

A gorgeous and fast-paced fighter, but no SFIV-beater



MODERN WARFARE

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Infinity Ward
Heritage: Call of Duty
1, 2 & 4
Link: www.modernwarfare2.com
ETA: 10th November

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Modern Warfare 2

Pass the Soap...

It takes a lot to upstage The Beatles, but at the recent Xbox conference at the E3 games show in Los Angeles, Modern Warfare 2 arguably did just that. While Fab Macca Wacca and Ringo Starr were hauled on to offer hollow platitudes regarding the forthcoming The Beatles: Rock Band,

the real showstopper games-wise was the live demo of the highly anticipated sequel to Call of Duty 4. And when we say highly anticipated, we're not exaggerating, the game garnering coverage on the front page of USA Today on the morning of the conference, with a detailed rundown of

what was to follow. Game spoilers in national newspapers may be yet to come to these shores, but it's proof of what a huge deal the Call of Duty franchise has become; Infinity Ward's decision to bring the conflict to the present day paying off in spades. In fact, CoD 4 is now the biggest-selling 360 shooter, and the most played game on Xbox Live.

Whooping and hollering

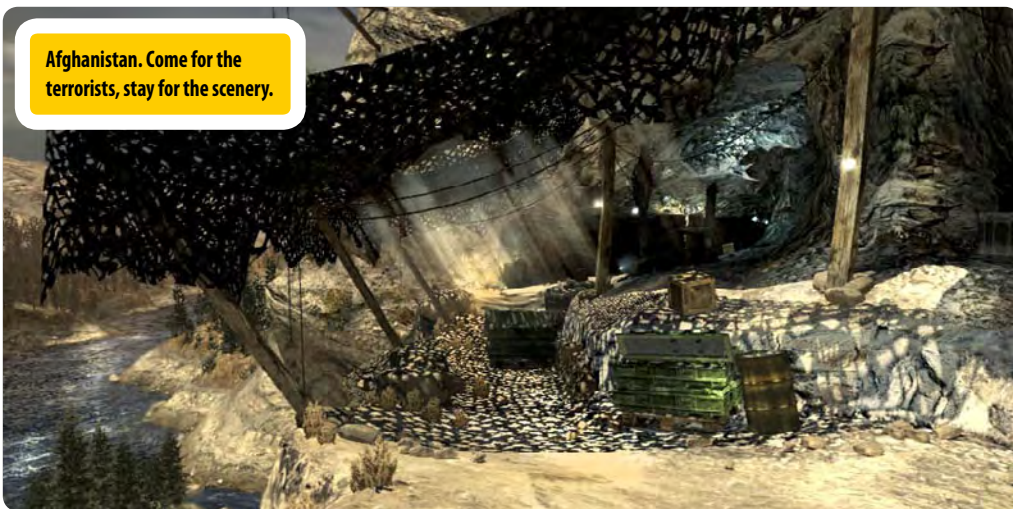
As such, there was a great deal of whooping and hollering when the sequel was unveiled to the press. We were so impressed that we went to see it again backstage at the Activision booth, where fellow visitors included none other than the diminutive Verne Troyer (aka Mini-Me) who demanded a private showing. We presume he wasn't disappointed, as while the name may have been streamlined, the action looks to be as ferocious as ever. And just to clarify, the full name is Modern

Warfare 2, the spin-off now presumably set to continue as a bona fide franchise.

With number two following on directly from the dramatic dénouement of CoD 4, a familiar character is in evidence in the shape of Captain Soap McTavish. However, he's no longer the character that you play, and is instead there to bark orders at a young rookie called Sergeant Gary 'Roach' Sanderson. We were privy to a mission entitled



Afghanistan. Come for the terrorists, stay for the scenery.

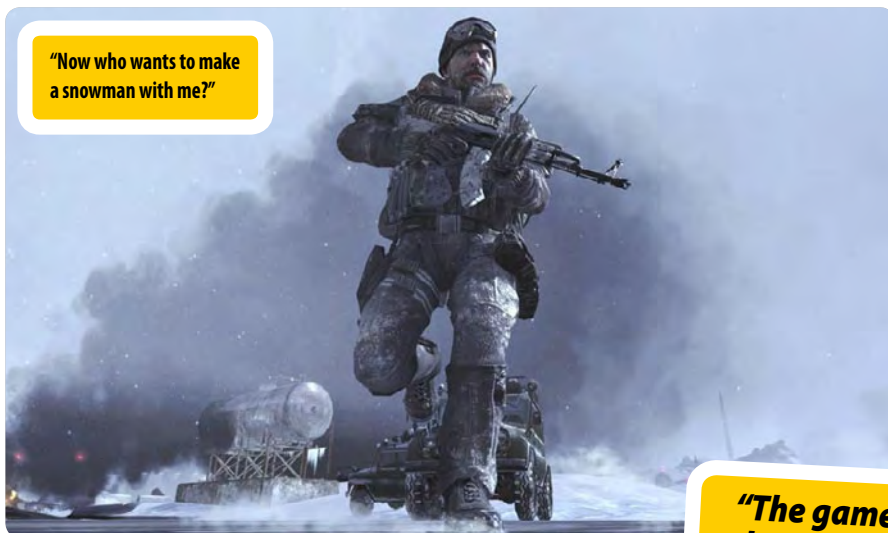


"You drive, I'll machinegun."

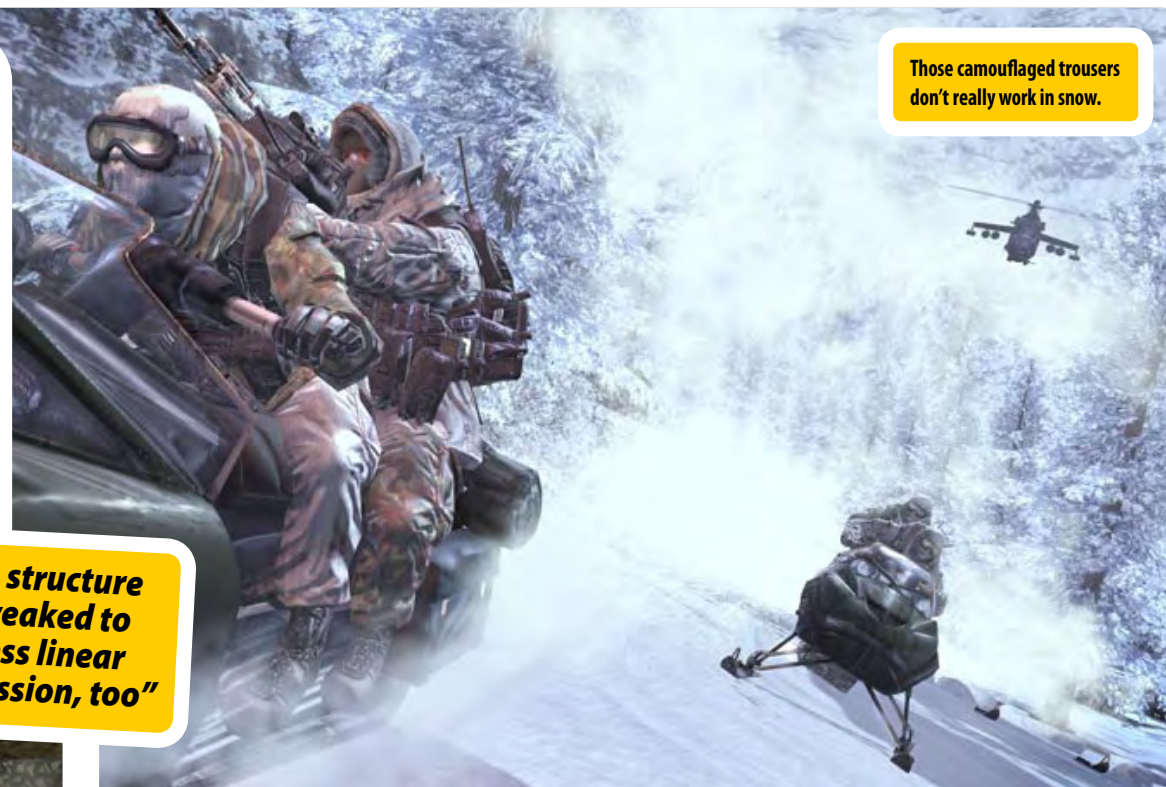


The Cliffhanger mission reaches tipping point.





"Now who wants to make a snowman with me?"



Those camouflaged trousers don't really work in snow.

"The game's structure has been tweaked to provide a less linear career progression, too"



The Afghan cave network. No sign of Bin Laden.

> Modern Warfare 2 cont.

Cliffhanger, kicking off in the frozen wastelands of Kazakhstan. Atop a windswept cliff, McTavish spits "Break's over Roach, let's go" and they begin to ease along a narrow ridge, with the interplay between the two characters established from the mission's start.

Interaction with the environment is key, and there's a dramatic set-piece where you leap over a gaping ravine and miss the ledge, only to be saved by the swarthy hands of your Soapy mentor. It's clearly scripted, but highly dramatic nevertheless. A passing plane dislodges some snow and it appears

that you are on the periphery of a heavily manned airfield. Simultaneously picking off stray guards on McTavish's count of three, the action harks back to the All Ghillied Up mission from CoD 4, arguably that game's seminal sequence.

On the gadget front, you're armed with a suppressed weapon replete with heartbeat sensor, which is able to detect enemies undercover of the snowstorm. Skulking around, downloading files, it all appears to be under control, but as ever, the pace is soon ramped up, and within minutes you're engaged in a full-scale action sequence that could have come from the opening of a Bond movie.



> Modern Warfare 2 cont.

As the music kicks in, jet fighters and fuel tanks start exploding and both characters make a run for it, sliding realistically down a snowy bank with the bad guys giving chase on snowmobiles. In a superbly brutal moment, McTavish forces one of them to dismount by clobbering him in the chest with an ice pick, and then steals his ride, instigating a gripping chase whereby you weave through the trees

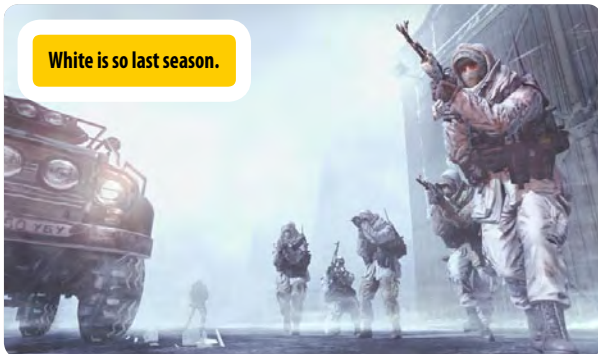
while picking off enemies with a handgun en route to a waiting helicopter. Which is cruelly where the action ends; a tantalising glimpse into what to expect this November.

Foreign policy

Having whipped us into a frenzy, Infinity Ward are remaining tight-lipped about other details, and refused to break their silence on the multiplayer aspect of the game, although we can confirm that there will be a co-op mode, despite previous reports to the contrary. As for the story, as before it will be a linear affair, taking you on a tour of global hotspots in pursuit of Zakhaev's successor, Makarov, making for plenty of sinister utterances in thick foreign accents from Russia to Brazil via Afghanistan.

Improving on the sublime CoD 4 would seem a thankless task, but Infinity Ward seem well-equipped, and the snippet we saw offered enhanced

White is so last season.



They've got about five seconds before that MIG explodes.



Grab some air in a snowmobile.



animation, superbly scripted events, and if anything an even more rarefied sense of being in the thick of the action. Throw in longer missions, more varied weaponry, riot shields, underwater sections, improved grenade physics, non-scripted civilians and – dog lovers look away now – the renewed opportunity to shoot feral hounds in the face, and the Modern Warfare franchise would appear to be in safe hands. Christmas number one? We wouldn't bet against it. ●

**PREVIEW
FEEDBACK!**
Click here to tell
us what you
think of Modern
Warfare 2



360Zine

MODERN WARFARE 2

HOW COMPLETE?

80%

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

95%

This is the modern world



HOW MODERN

We interrogate Infinity Ward
Studio Head, **Vince Zampella**



It was originally going to be a mountaineering sim...



Thermal underwear a priority.

Can you tell us about the new characters in the game? Who's this Roach bloke then?

That's who you play. If you noticed, Soap is the character you played in the last game, and is now the commanding officer of Task Force 141, and you're very much a newcomer.

What's the setting?

Well it's set pretty much following the last one. It picks up the story from where the last game left off so it's a true sequel.

Are you talking about any other missions apart from the one we've seen? Are there any stealthier ones like the Ukraine mission in CoD 4, which was one of the more popular ones?

We're not really talking about too many others now. Our plan

is to keep as much secret as possible. That way, players get the maximum impact when they play the game.

What other locations are there?

That was Kazakhstan. Obviously you've seen the trailer, so we have Rio, too. There are more locations, but we haven't particularly said yet, except for Afghanistan obviously.

Why do think your games are so popular?

Um, good question. We tell a story. We're not just making a game, we're making an experience that we kind of immerse you into. It's a game that takes into consideration more than just what's in front of you; it's an immersive world, a great story and the best experience we can deliver. We don't drive features, and we don't drive technology around buzzwords where we have to have feature X or



"Okay, you can borrow my towel."





Bulletproof riot shields
are a new addition.

**"Throughout our organisation,
ideas come from everywhere
and people take ownership of
what they do"**

The favelas of Rio de Janeiro.
At least it's not snowing.



> Interview continued

'We need five more weapons than the last game!' You know what? If five more weapons makes the game better then let's put them in. If it wouldn't then who cares? But we don't need to have a particular feature or anything like that. It's all about what makes the best experience possible.

Your games seem to have a particularly crisp action feeling.

It's just our style of how we kind of make games, I think. Throughout our organisation, ideas come from everywhere and people take ownership of what they do. The designers and artists who work on those levels take ownership of them; they put their hearts into them. It's not a solid technical answer, but it really is a lot about heart and ownership. When you believe in what you're doing, you do a better job at it.

Did you have any experience of firing real weapons?

Hell yeah! I mean, yes, we were forced to fire amazing weapons. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it!

Did it expand the game beyond what you already knew?

I don't know that it expanded it more; it's just different. If you notice that a lot of animations were really smooth then that's because we were able to put in more of that kind of transitional animation stuff. You do these firefight exercises and you film them, and you watch how characters react and how

they turn and carry these heavy weapons and how they move... We put a lot more kind of intimate detail into that.

Is it true that you have a big fan base in the US military? Does the modern setting mean that they're even more in love with the series?

I think so, yeah. Our military adviser Hank Keirsey is actually over in Iraq right now – and I shouldn't really say specifically what he's doing. So he's over there and he said he was out on patrol and he went to one of the posts and kicked in the door, Hank style, and they were in there playing Modern Warfare. That's great.

We saw McTavish. Any more familiar faces that player will recognise from CoD4?

It's possible. It is a sequel to the last game so the fates of some characters may be determined. That shootout on the bridge [at the end of CoD4] was very chaotic, craziness happened, and some characters might be dead and some might not... ●



Infinity Ward's Studio Head, Vince Zampella

MODERN WARFARE 2

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Infinity Ward
Heritage: Call Of Duty 1, 2 & 4
Link: www.modernwarfare2.com
ETA: 10th November



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Prototype

Alex and the city...

Publisher: Activision
Developer: Radical Entertainment
Heritage: Scarface: The World is Yours, Hulk: Ultimate Destruction
Link: www.prototypegame.com
OUT NOW

We've been following the development of this for some time now, without fully understanding the story behind it. Having played it, there's a possibility that it makes even less sense, but it doesn't matter. All you need to know is that you are Alex Mercer, waking up in a New York morgue with the ability to shapeshift, throw vehicles, and scale tall buildings in what was possibly intended to be a nod to the briefly fashionable phenomenon of parkour.

Although if there's a Frenchman who can run up the side of the Empire State building and leap off without sustaining injury, we'd like to meet him.

Dodgy experiments

Imbued with ridiculous powers as the result of an experiment gone awry, you are effectively a superhero, albeit a morally ambivalent one with little concern for anyone but yourself. Essentially it's a battle on two fronts, against the might of the military who

"You are Alex Mercer, waking up in a morgue with the ability to shapeshift, throw vehicles and scale tall buildings"

made you, and the hordes of infected monsters that have sprung up as a result. Running up buildings is simply a matter of holding down the sprint key in a slightly less elegant version of the climbing sections of Assassin's Creed. And while we're dropping names, there's also a large dose of Crackdown in evidence, with similar



You can run, and you can also hide.

He's got something to do with the conspiracy.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

You're a human Swiss Army knife...



Claws



Blade

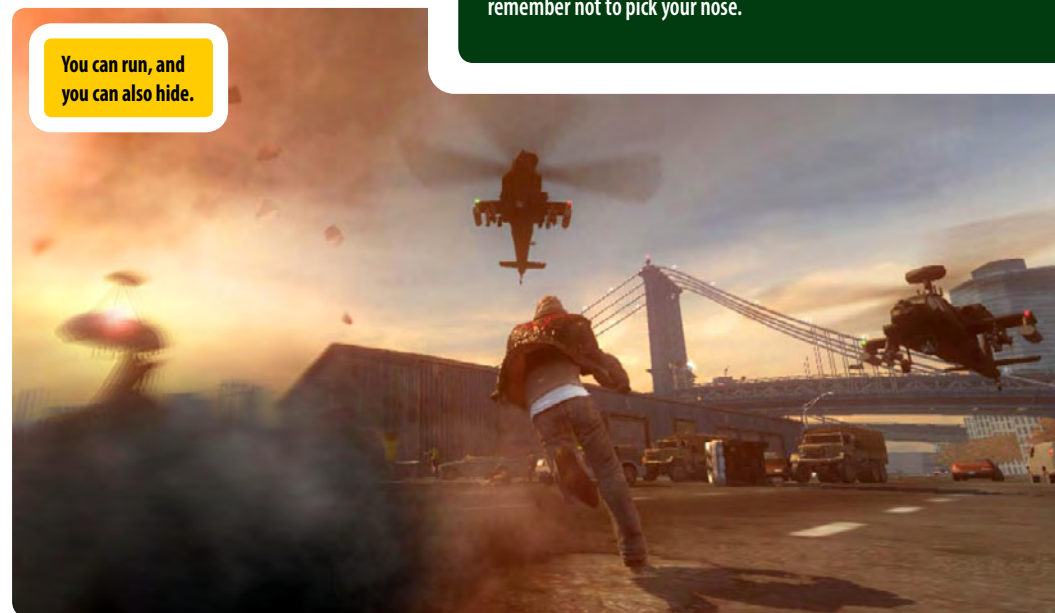


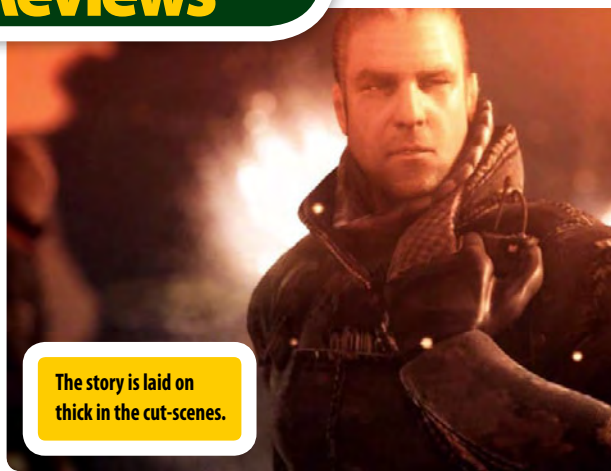
Hammer fist



Claws

Like a beardless Wolverine, these lethal talons spring from your fingers. Just remember not to pick your nose.





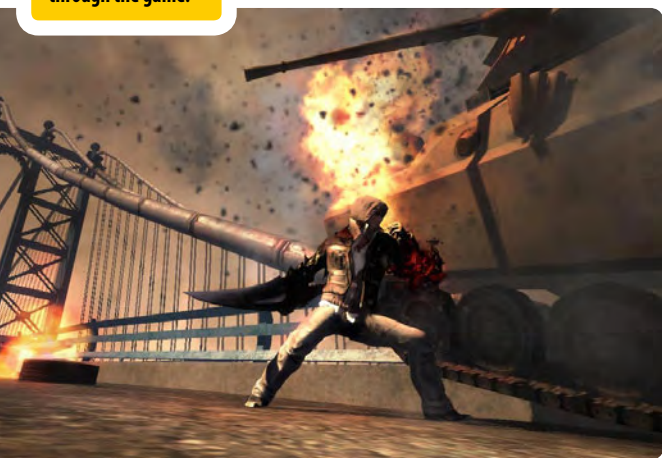
The story is laid on thick in the cut-scenes.

> Prototype continued

'verticality' and some near identical side-tasks, known here as 'Events'.

While Prototype is technically an open-world game, you will have to compete the core missions in the order that they appear. And although the emphasis is very much on combat, there is some stealth-lite whereby you 'consume' people and assume their identity and skills, particularly handy if

Alex's story unfolds as you battle through the game.



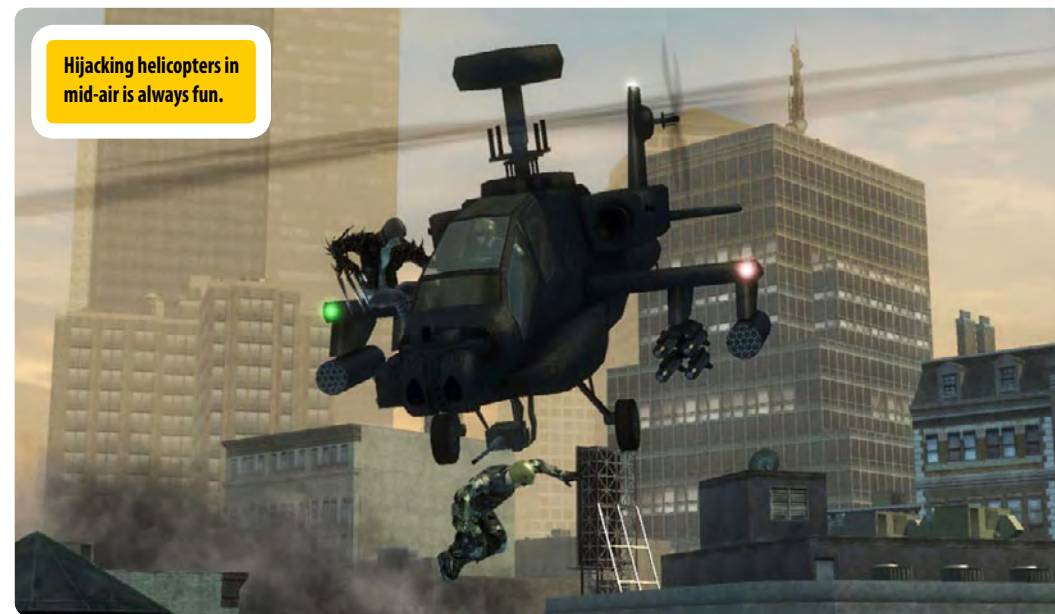
"I wonder if there's a deli open..."

they are in the military, as you are suddenly able to stroll around bases undetected, as well as pilot helicopters and drive tanks.

Special powers

As the game progresses, you earn points that can be spent on a variety of special powers, enabling you to mete out further damage and earn more points. If you've played the recent Wolverine game then it's a similar system, except in Prototype the upgrades actually make a tangible difference. As your skills increase, so do the tasks faced, and you will eventually be involved in some preposterous boss battles that are almost a parody of the concept, with chaos ensuing to the extent that you sometimes lose sight of your character. There are a lot of button combinations to contend with, and towards the latter stages it's an almost physical approach, requiring you to rest your thumbs between missions.

The pace occasionally slows down when you're in disguise, and evading the military is little more than a case of hiding round the corner and shapeshifting into a soldier, with your



Hijacking helicopters in mid-air is always fun.

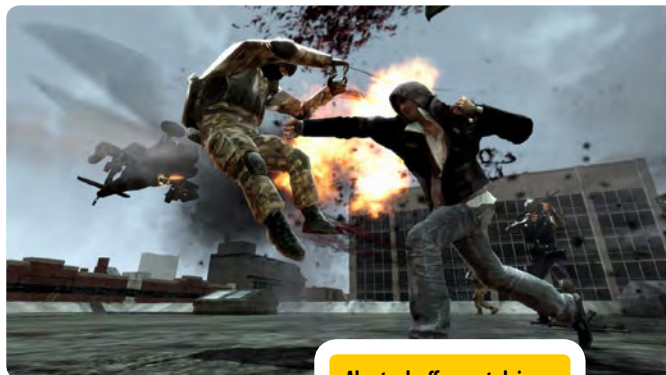
QUICKFIRE QUIZ

colleagues seemingly unperturbed that one of their mates has suddenly acquired the power of flight. Your cover is generally blown fairly quickly, and a further onslaught ensues, as you hijack tanks, and even leap into helicopters in mid-air. Most of the missions tread a fine line between frustrating and compelling, and while you will inevitably find yourself swearing

>



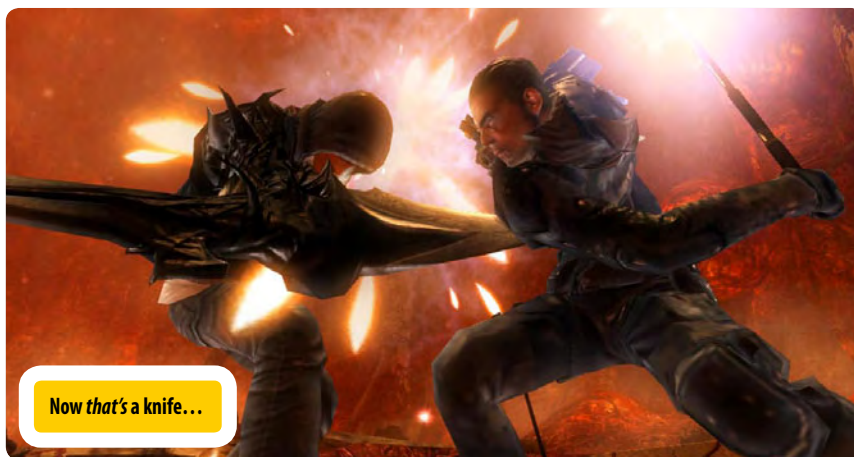
The Blackwatch are stupid but deadly.



Alex took offense at claims his much-loved hoodie was bought at Asda.



With Alex waving a massive blade around, there's no surprise to find out that the red stuff does fly...



Now that's a knife...

> Prototype continued

loudly, punching the controller once again for the obligatory 'one more go' is all too tempting.

Throughout the game, Alex uncovers the so-called Web of Intrigue by consuming specific targets. This entails watching brief clips of some mildly disturbing real-world imagery, replete with an earnest voiceover providing some vague explanation of how you happen to be wandering around in a hooded top with the ability to sprout blades from your hands. The concept might be barney, but the game happens to take itself very seriously indeed, with some deep exposition as to your predicament.

It might seem as though the whole world (or Manhattan at least) is against you, but Alex does have a couple of allies, albeit mainly in the form of cut-scene characters explaining what you have to do next. In case you were worrying about having to think, what to do next is always pointed out in the

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

You can do anything!

Drive a tank

Endless boss battles

Wake up in the morgue

Throw a car at a helicopter!

form of a colour-coded arrow, and getting there is generally a case of heading in the right direction and pressing sprint. If you kill a few dozen pedestrians en route, there are no real repercussions, and practically the entire city seems to exist as collateral damage, with the vast majority of vehicles seeming to be little more than shells that can be thrown at the enemy.

Prototype is never going to win any prizes for subtlety, but for sheer destructive thrills, little comes close. Flying around New York can be exhilarating, and you certainly know you're in a fight, with some ludicrously intense action throughout. Not sure about that hoodie though...

Steve Hill

360Zine Verdict

Fun, as long as your thumbs can take it

Intense combat

Explosive action

No multiplayer

84%



Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood

Publisher: Ubisoft
Developer: Techland
Heritage: Call of Juarez
Link: <http://callofjuarez.uk.ubi.com>
OUT NOW

A good old-fashioned tale of brotherly hate

If Techland's shooter sequel is to be believed, the American West was a pretty horrible place. It's populated by people who are out for themselves and only themselves; people who shoot first and ask questions later; people who'd rather celebrate the end of a war by starting a new one instead of enjoying the silence. Juarez's world is

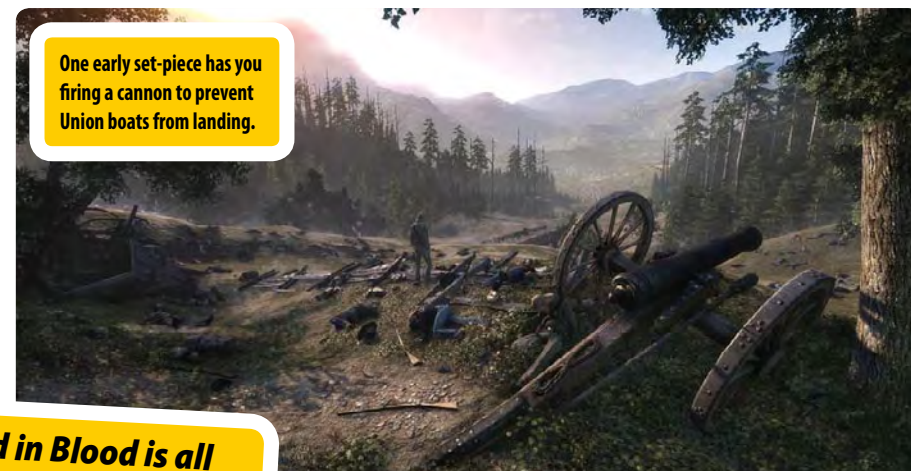
no sugar-coated Hollywood Western – our sibling heroes are merely the least bad of a collection of utter bastards.

The story starts in the Confederate trenches, as Ray McCall attempts to rescue younger, better-looking brother Thomas from a Union assault. Ignoring a direct order, the pair set off to protect their Georgian homestead, and wind

"Bound in Blood is all about the journey – and there are plenty of memorable moments along the way"

up being pursued by their commanding officer, a man named Barnsby whose moustache immediately marks him out as the antagonist, even before the McCalls have earned his wrath. Their little brother William, a priest, tags along when the two decide to head toward Mexico to find a hidden cache of gold. If you played the original, you'll know Ray ends up as a man of the cloth himself, so it's clear that something goes badly wrong. Yet while the resolution might be fairly predictable, Bound in Blood is all about the journey – and there are plenty of memorable moments along the way.

Though you'd perhaps naturally assume that two brothers means two players, Juarez remains a single-player-only affair – on most stages you can choose whether to play as Ray or as



One early set-piece has you firing a cannon to prevent Union boats from landing.

HOW THE WEST WAS FUN

Juarez's golden moments



Sibling rivalry



Duel of the fates

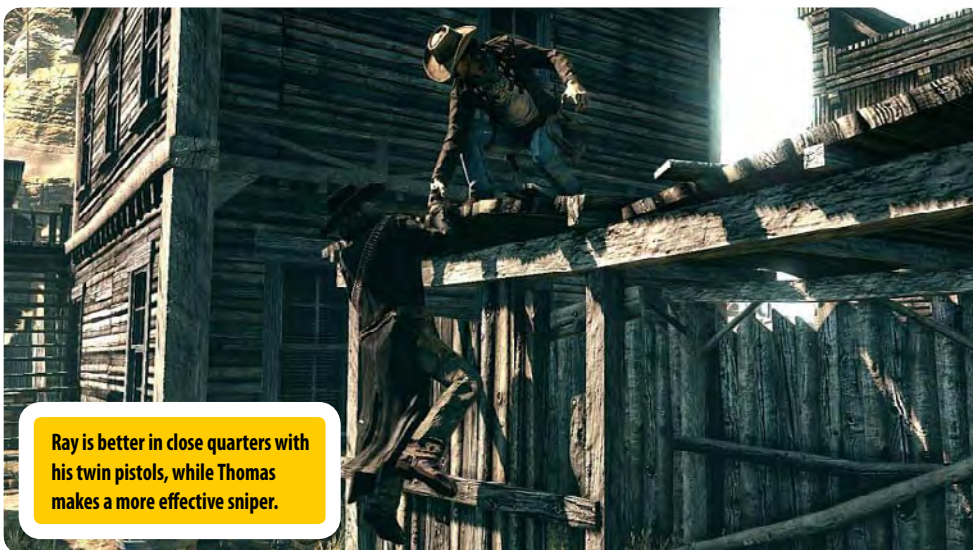


Injun territory



Sibling rivalry

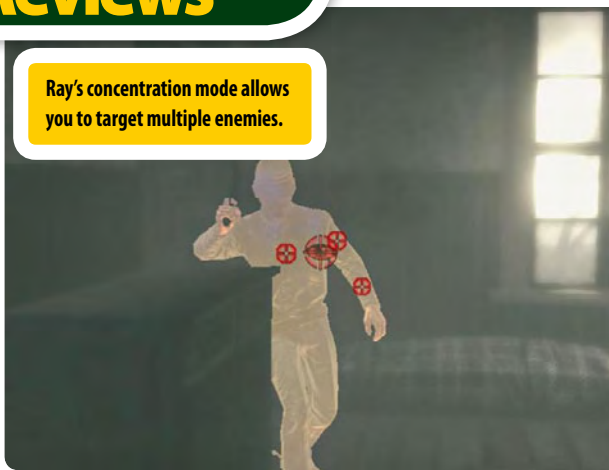
Thomas and Ray bicker their way throughout the adventure, and it's often amusing and oddly endearing. At one point Ray expresses his distaste for water, to which Thomas retorts: "That ain't no surprise – you smell like the inside of an old boot." Before one level, they're even fighting on the character select screen.



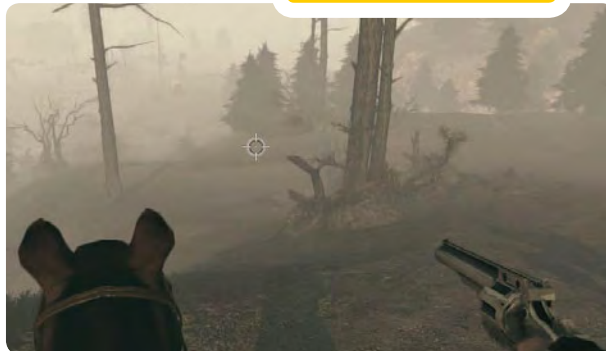
Ray is better in close quarters with his twin pistols, while Thomas makes a more effective sniper.



Ray's concentration mode allows you to target multiple enemies.



There's not quite enough horse riding for our liking, though you do get at least one cracking equine chase sequence.



> Bound in Blood continued

Thomas, with a few others making the decision for you. Ray is the tank – heavier, more powerful, can take more damage – while Thomas is quicker and more agile, able to climb up using his rope to lasso marked pieces of scenery. It's a pity this ability is only used in prescribed situations, but for the most part you'll be too overwhelmed with enemies to really notice. The first game's mix of stealth and shooting didn't always blend too well, but longueurs are rare here – by the end of the first chapter alone you'll have been

responsible for more than a hundred enemy deaths. Yet despite a brief second-act lull – a couple of levels where you feel like you're walking between shooting galleries – Techland mixes up the action well. Creeping through a cornfield to murder Union soldiers is an early highlight, while a later river defence of a stagecoach from attacking Indians is equally thrilling. Two sections arriving in fairly short order give a hint as to what we can expect from Rockstar's open-world Western Red Dead Redemption – huge

"By the end of the first chapter you'll have been responsible for more than 100 deaths"

expanses of Mexico and Arizona each contain three side-missions for additional gold. They're an odd inclusion, but make for a welcome change of pace, and a chance to explore some gorgeously desolate environments.

It's a much more solid game than its predecessor. The shooting feels great,

and exploration isn't nearly as fiddly – though it borrows from the Big Book of Co-op Clichés by forcing Thomas to give his brother a lift up to higher ground. There are successful tweaks to the original's celebrated one-on-one shootouts, too – the camera shooting from the hip just as you do, lending the old Western staple additional drama as you try to keep your hand close to your gun while circling your enemy. Concentration mode returns – this time enabled after a number of successive kills – and is different for each brother. >

FREEZE FRAME

Taking you through the game one step at a time...



5 MINUTES

A quick flash to the finish shows things aren't going to end well between the McCalls...



1 HOUR

Gatlings, cornfields and steamboats – oh my! Chapter two is terrific and looks stunning, too.



3 HOURS

The action's starting to get a wee bit samey, but Techland has a few surprises in store...



6 HOURS

We're in a bit of a ghost town for this chapter, as the McCalls chase down Colonel Barnsby.



12 HOURS

Single-player is over, but the multiplayer modes are less of an afterthought this time.





Juarez isn't big on explosive barrels, but when they are used the results are pretty spectacular.

 Roll over screen for annotations



> Bound in Blood continued

Ray gets a few seconds to pause and move his crosshairs over multiple enemies to take them all down in a quick-fire burst of shots, while Thomas auto-targets rivals, flicks of the right stick slamming the hammer down on his revolver for oh-so-satisfying insta-kills. At scripted intervals you'll get the chance for a slo-mo co-op attack – bursting through double doors and firing with twin guns as your sights slowly move inwards. When the dust settles, you'll often find five or more bodies slumped to the floor.

Polish and attention to detail

It's a splendid-looking game, benefiting from a polish and an attention to detail not always evident in the original. Despite some minor issues with screen tearing – most notable during an otherwise exhilarating stagecoach chase – it's a treat for the eyes, with epic widescreen vistas showing a real appreciation for time and place. Gun effects are suitably meaty, while the soundtrack gives traditional Western-style tunes a harder-edged, more contemporary twist.

Some solid multiplayer variants on eight huge maps help make Bound in Blood a better value package than the original. It doesn't quite match the first game's quirky charm – you can't send people to meet their maker while quoting from the bible any more – but it's superior in almost every other way.

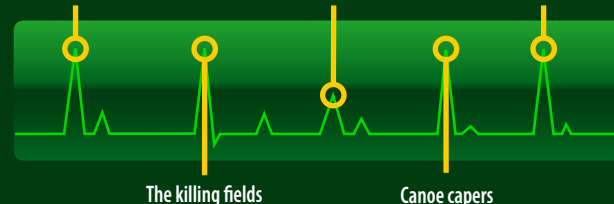
Chris Schilling

PULSOMETER *Signs of life*

Trench warfare




Bang out of order

Gatling versus God



360Zine Verdict

Ubi's sequel could be the shooter of the year so far

-  Sublime set-pieces
-  Meatier multiplayer
-  Less charming than the first

87%





Publisher: THQ

Developer: Volition

Heritage: Saints Row series,
The PunisherLink: www.redfaction.com
OUT NOW

Red Faction: Guerrilla

Appetite for destruction? This is your kind of game

Destructible scenery has always been part of the Red Faction DNA, but it's not until now that it's been used to its fullest. Guerrilla isn't awash with new ideas, but it does demolition very well indeed. 'One-trick pony' might be a harsh description, but even if that's not a million miles away from the truth, at least it's a spectacular trick Guerrilla pulls off.

The beauty of it is that it's all unscripted, and anything you do

destroy remains there as a constant reminder of your building-smashing exploits. Which turns what would otherwise be fairly standard third-person shooter set-pieces into gloriously daft, cinematic spectacles. Why focus on blasting bullet-sponge enemies when you can collapse a building on top of them? Why shoot away at support pillars from a safe distance when you can ram into them with your vehicle and witness the walls

Guerrilla gives good explosion, that's for sure. At times, the destruction is pretty damn spectacular.



"Why focus on blasting bullet-sponge enemies when you can collapse a building on top of them?"

tumbling down around you? Why admire your handiwork from a distance when you can stand on the roof and wait for it to plummet to the ground like a lift with its cable snapped? It might seem a bit silly at times, but that's what makes it such good fun.

Falling down

A pity, then, that it falls down in other areas. Missions are generally pretty samey and bland, even if the new weapons give you new and exciting ways to take the fight to the EDF. Alec Mason is as generic and dull a hero as they come. And lengthy play sessions really do exacerbate the repetitive nature of the tasks. At its worst it feels more like a proof of concept with game elements tacked on.

But if it occasionally feels like a tech demo, what a tech demo it is. Played online with friends, it's even more hilariously action-packed, while the pass-the-pad Wrecking Crew is one of the best local multiplayer games of this generation. It had us giggling like naughty schoolchildren for the most

MARS ATTACKS

A very different kind of terraforming



Hammer time



Nano a mano



Pack for good



Hammer time

Your trusty sledgehammer comes in handy at the outset, and is surprisingly useful, as well as being more enjoyably visceral to use in close-quarters combat. It takes a while to bring down a building this way, but you'll know you did it by hand. Guns are quicker, but sometimes it feels a bit like cheating.

part, and we'd gladly take detention if it meant we could play Red Faction: Guerrilla some more. ●

Chris Schilling

360Zine Verdict

Some innovation, but occasionally bogged down by samey missions



Fun with a capital F



Deliriously daft multiplayer



A bit repetitive; dull scenery

86%

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